DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 886 PS 013 612

TITLE Evidence Continues to Mount on Benefits of Preschool.
INSTITUTION Capitol Publications, Inc., Arlington, VA.
PUB DATE 23 Aug 83
NOTE 4p.
AVAILABLE FROM Capitol Publications, 1300 N. 17th St., Arlington, VA 22209 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Report on Preschool Education; v15 n17 p4-6 Aug 23 1983

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cost Effectiveness; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Benefits; Educational Research; Longitudinal Studies; *Low Income Groups; *Preschool Education; *Preschool Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS High Scope Educational Research Foundation MI; Perry Preschool Project; PF Project

ABSTRACT

High Scope's Perry Preschool Study shows that early childhood education programs pay dividends later in life for low-income children and society. Findings indicate that children from low-income families who have attended preschool fare better in areas of academic achievement and employment, spend fewer years in special education classes, and have a lower percentage of teenage pregnancies and delinquent behavior. Further research is recommended in several, seldom-looked-at aspects of early childhood education. The areas mentioned are the amount of quality care available, hard-to-measure behavior attributes like self-reliance and consideration, and the attitudes and reactions of parents. (JW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

William H. Sims

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED234886

V15 N17

EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO MOUNT ON BENEFITS OF PRESCHOOL

The evidence continues to mount that early childhood education programs pay dividends later in life for low-income children and society.

Low-income children who started attending the Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti, Mich., in the fall of 1962 and have been tracked since then by the High Scope Educational Research Foundation are faring better than a control group who didn't go to preschool.

John Clement, High Scope's research and national projects director, gave conference participants a preview of new findings from a High Scope study to be released this fall. High Scope's Perry Preschool study is one of the most comprehensive in the field.

The most recent findings show that by the time they reached age 19, 67 percent of the the youngsters who attended preschool graduated from high school, while 47 percent of the nonpreschoolers graduated. Thirty-eight percent of those who had attended preschool were getting postsecondary training, while 21 percent of the nonpreschoolers were.

When Clement and his research team locked at the 19-year-olds' socio-economic success, they found: 50 percent of the youngsters who had attended preschool were working, while 32 percent of the nonpreschoolers were working; 17 percent of the youngsters who attended preschool had been receiving welfare as a case in their own right based on welfare records, while 37 percent of the nonpreschoolers had been receiving welfare.

Turning to teen-age pregnancies, 17 pregnancies or births occurred among 25 women who had attended preschool, while 28 pregnancies or births occurred among 28 women who had not gone to preschool.

When it comes to getting into trouble with the law or delinquent behavior, the youngsters who attended preschool fared better than their nonpreschool peers in the control group. This difference was seen in both the number of arrests and the seriousness of the offense, Clement said. There were 73 arrests for the preschool group, while there were 145 arrests for the group that didn't attend preschool.

(more)

PS013612

EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO MOUNT ON BENEFITS OF PRESCHOOL (Cont.)

In addition, the children who attended the Perry Preschool spent fewer years in special education classes.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Using cost-benefit analysis, High Scope economist Steve Barnett was able to show that preschool for low-income children makes good economic sense.

The Perry preschool program required taxpayers to put money up front since it was a publicly funded program, Barnett said. But these children needed less special education, cutting taxpayers' later costs. In some ways, however, the success of the program meant that taxpayers had to pay more later when more of these youngsters stayed in high school. But taxpayers continued to reap the benefits of preschool when these children relied less on welfare and had fewer entanglements with the law, Barnett said.

"The bottom line," Barnett said, "is the taxpayer would be foolish not to pay for early childhood education for disadvantaged children."

But for middle-income children and families, Barnett says a cost-benefit model will not show the same kind of benefits. Middle-income children don't have as high an arrest rate as their poorer peers, and they don't end up on welfare as often. So even if preschool means that middle-income children will get more education and better jobs, those benefits will end up in the pocket of the middle class, not in society's pocket, he said.

"On economic grounds, it begins to look like the the public would not have a keen interest" in providing programs for middle-income children, he said.

Moreover, to do a cost-benefit analysis, an economist must be able to draw upon research, Barnett said, and there's a lack of research on the effects of preschool on the middle class.

While there's a scarcity of research on the effects of preschool on middle-income children, there's plenty of information about how low-income children fare in early childhood programs.

Giving a brief refresher course on the research, Clement said no evidence exists that day care is harmful. Here's a precis of other findings: center care may produce better short-term effects on children than home care; some evidence suggests that children in center care are less attached to their mothers, although according to Clement and Ann Epstein, a High Scope research associate, these studies have been flawed; and children in center-based care have been more boisterous and more aggressive than their peers.

More Research Needed While early childhood programs have been the focus of a lot of research, there are still several areas where research is needed, Clement said. For example, most research has looked at high-quality centers. "Very high quality care is probably not the norm," he noted, so research on care in less than superlative settings is needed.

Research should broaden the type of behavior it looks at. So far the research has been limited to the kinds of behavior that can be observed, like hitting. Attributes like selfreliance and consideration, while hard to measure, are "ultimately the kinds of behavior we're interested in," Clement said. (more)

EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO MOUNT ON THE BENEFITS OF PRESCHOOL (Cont.)

And children are not the only people receiving programs, Clement pointed out. A host of questions addressed to parents must be answered: How satisfied are parents with care? How does the level of satisfaction affect relationships with the caregiver? Does early childhood education increase or decrease the involvement of parents in education? --HH